

EXHIBIT 19
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HB 253

Montana Wild Buffalo Recovery and Conservation Act 2009
House Bill (HB) 253

My name is Glenn Hockett. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal and Range Science from Montana State University. I also serve as the volunteer president for the Gallatin Wildlife Association, a regional sportsmen's group in Bozeman, Montana.

As a hunter and a conservationist I am here to testify in support of House Bill 253. This bill is simple. It is bi-partisan and it is a Montana solution. In that regard I want to thank representatives Mike Phillips and Ted Washburn for their bi-partisan leadership on this bill and for all the folks who have come here today to participate in this discussion. Thank you as well to all the committee members for taking the time to review this important piece of legislation.

Currently the Department of Livestock has authority over wild bison in Montana, including the authority to trespass onto private property without permission. Under their watch our government undertook the largest slaughter of wild bison since the 1800's, killing more than 1700 animals last year largely without remorse. However, this slaughter comes with extreme costs economically, ecologically, socially and I would argue spiritually. It is time to put years of wasteful and divisive wild buffalo management behind us. House Bill 253 is a step in that direction.

House Bill 253 is a sincere effort to place authority for wild bison management in the hands of wildlife professionals and biologists within the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks while at the same time protecting and respecting private property rights as well as livestock interests.

Although wild bison have been treated like diseased livestock they are clearly wildlife and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks is the proper agency to manage them. At the same time this bill instructs the FWP to maintain a spirit of cooperation with the Department of Livestock to ensure livestock and private property rights are protected. I believe House Bill 253 establishes a sustainable balance.

I am proud of the local bi-partisan leadership guiding this bill through the House of Representatives and I would once again like to thank Representatives Mike Phillips and Ted Washburn in that regard.

In short, House Bill 253 will allow wild bison to be treated as wildlife including fair-chase public hunting, while respecting and protecting private property rights. It provides a foundation for local solutions to blossom, where private landowners will largely both lead and limit bison recovery and conservation in southwest Montana. Please support this important legislation.

Thank you.

Glenn Hockett, Volunteer President, Gallatin Wildlife Association, 586-1729